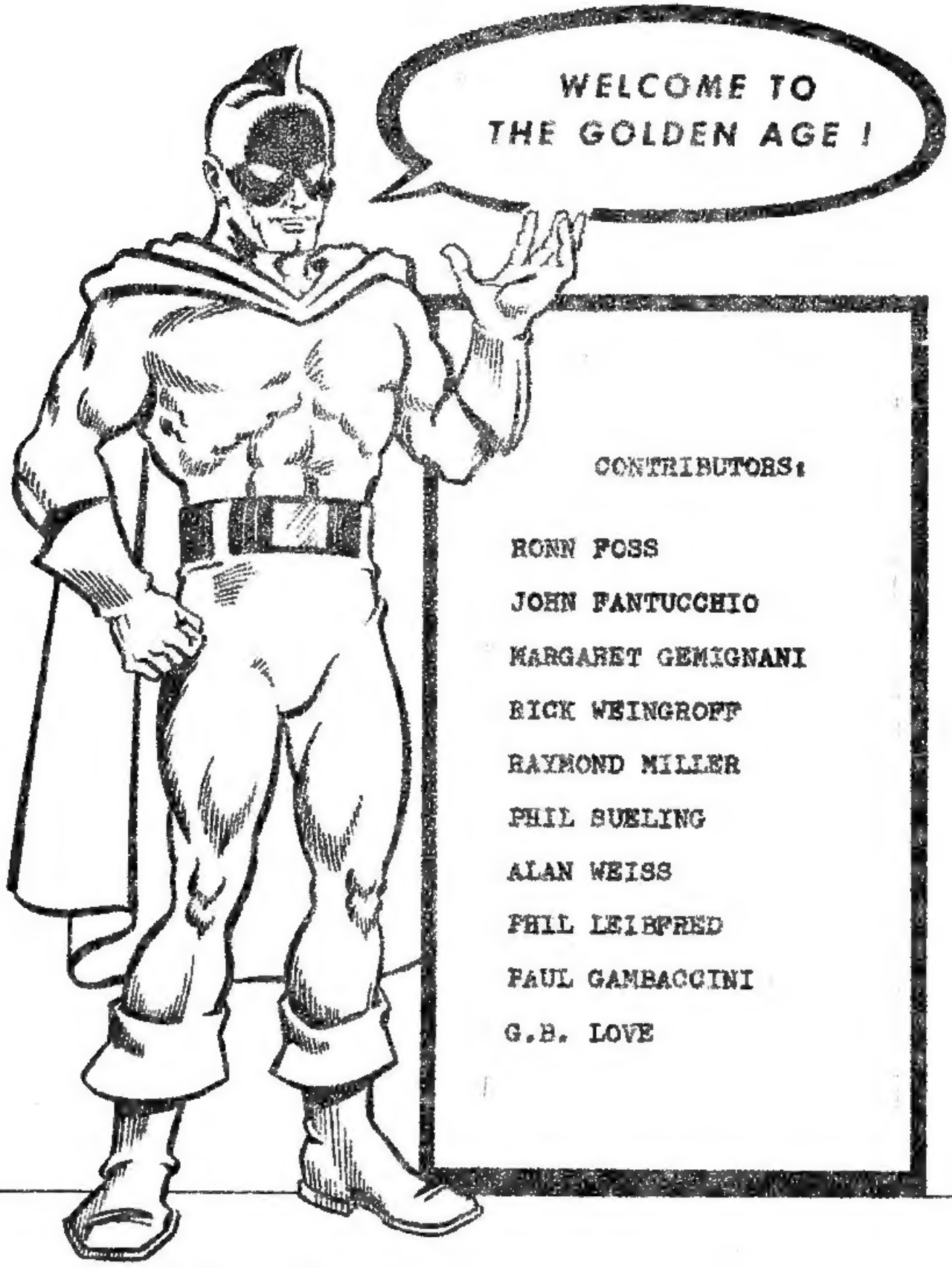
Golden Age

NO. 1



CONTRIBUTORS:

RONN FOSS

JOHN FANTUCCHIO

MARGARET GEMIGNANI

RICK WEINGROFF

RAYMOND MILLER

PHIL BUELING

ALAN WEISS

PHIL LEIBFRED

PAUL GAMBACCINI

G.B. LOVE

THE FLAME

ILLUSTRATED BY

TIMELY'S LOVELY LADIES
by Margaret Gemignani & Rick Weingroff

The Captain's Golden Goddess - Golden Girl

Behind every successful man there is a forceful woman, or so the saying goes; certainly Timely believed this age old addage. If Sungirl is not enough evidence of this fact, the author points to Golden Girl by way of further adducement. Born out of desperation, the golden goddess underwent one of the more unique changes in comic history--held jointly with the Black Hood, among others--in that she changed her costume at the height of her career. Originally sporting a gold and green cape, golden tunic, the winged gold and green headress-typifying her stature as the partner of Capt. America-and green boots and gloves, the golden glamour girl later changed to a patriotic blue and red tunic; throughout her entire history she wore the identifying single star on her chest-once again relating her to Captain America.

Her origin, in CAPTAIN AMERICA #66, relates the apparent death of Cap's career-long boy-buddy, Bucky, at the hands of the Villainess, Lavender ("apparent" because, later we learn that although the wound was serious, Bucky eventually recovers). Having worked as a team-member for so long, the popular Captain found that as a "loner" he was a good team-man. As so often happens, his long-time girl friend Betty Ross, came to his rescue. Cap reveals to her his secret identity and asks her to become his partner in fighting crime. Already being a fairly athletic-type, she is trained to

the peak of her aluring feminine ability by Cap. Appearing in CAPTAIN AMERICA and MARVEL MYSTERY during the late forties, this great gal Friday was certainly one of Timely's most popular pulse pounders.

Lady of the Sun-Sungirl

The popular Human Torch, although famous in his own right, bears the distinction of having, during the forties, no less than two partners: one, a flaming youth no older than Johnny Storm, named Toro, and a second, completely different from the first; the golden haired maid of light--Sun Girl! Dressed in a golden tunic, trimmed in sapphire, blue gloves and tights (form-fitted to allow her to utilize all her abilities unhindered! Sungirl wore no mask, for she had no alter ego. Besides her red striped purse, from which she could pull a rope (more handy than a mirror in her business) or any similar weapons, ala Batwoman, her greatest power--making her a fitting partner for the mighty Torch--was a unique sunlamp which gave off a blinding light(to which she was unaffected)

The Timely female, a mixture of kindness and capacity (as well as beauty), was epitomized by Sungirl--a tall blonde, a few years younger than the Torch. For all her beauty, this demure young lady could handle herself in any struggle and still manage to look sedate. The apparently originless Sungirl acted as an information center and girl Friday to her android partner and did little or no fighting; obviously, with one member of the team being an android, no romance was ever sparked between the flaming friends and this powerful heroine was never called upon by the writers to play the girl-in-distress.

On her own, however, Sungirl was a staunch crimefighter, taking on her share of deadly opponents; one such, for example, was Dr. Dreaver the dangerous maniac who called monsters from their briny home to aid him in his nefarious activities. Appearing in SUNGIRL 1-3, THE HUMAN TORCH 32,33, ALL WINNERS COMICS 1, and several issues of MARVEL MYSTERY, the Lady of Light, although short-lived, was one of the most deadly and popular of the Timely timorous set.

The All Winners Wench-Miss America

An interesting contrast to the fiery Sungirl is the darling of the All Winners Squad, Miss America. Disguised as Madeline Joyce, the Clark Kent type--a plain girl, of meek disposition, so as to throw suspicion of her dual identity from herself--Miss America could quickly turn into a dainty bundle of super powers. Although one of the smallest of the Timely troubleshooters, the raven haired crimefighter, clad in a red tunic and hat, with red and blue tights topped by a similarly colored shield on her head and chest, was more than a match for the opposite sex's more heinous criminals.

Perhaps the most intriguing part of her identity was the fact that, instead of a concealing mask, this apparently myopic mystery woman wore glasses. Unbreakable and tightly molded to the head so as not to fly off while flying or fighting, these glasses are a singularly imposing problem since Miss America did not wear them in all her appearences in the All Winners Squad, perhaps, as many

SUB GIRL

Miss AMERICA

A MYSTERIOUS LEAP OUT OF A WINDOW PLUNGES THAT CRIME CRUSHING DYNAMO MISS AMERICA ON THE TRAIL OF A VOICE OF DEATH, IN A STRANGE MYSTERY, WHEN.....
"[illegible] MAKES A RECORD!"

suggest, to play up the human side of this super-heroine. At any rate, the blue caped Miss America appeared in MARCEL MYSTERY 52-85, ALL WINNERS, ALL SELECT, SUNGIRL in a fairly successful career.

Namor's Neurosises- Namora, Princess Fen, and Doria

Born to a woman of the sea and ax white explorer, Namor was raised to hate all surface men, including his father. As an adult the mighty Sub-Mariner was dedicated to the destruction of the land-people, and, in his life were several contradictory influences. Betty Dean and Namora were able to restrain his hatred for surfacemen, and in that way stay his razing of Earth cities; his mother, Princess Fen, on the other hand was concerned but a little for the earth people and acted to restrain her son only to help their home Atlantis.

Princess Fen was a light skinned, red haired vixen, able to communicate telepathically with her mighty son, and

Namora, on the other hand, was the companion to the nasty Namor in many adventures and his lady-love throughout. Blonde, tall, and shapely, Namora, the Queen of the Sea, wore either a red or blue suit, winged headress, and, of course, the winged appendages of her infamous prince, Namor, While in the sea. When walking among land-people she wore palid green pants and black sweater. On her belt she wore the "N" of the House of Namor, whether on land or sea.

Perhaps her most outstanding contribution to the Sub-Mariner's career was her steadying influence on him. Although she had no particular love for her earthing-brethren, she did deign to sanction their existance; and, through this, stop Namor's nefarious deeds. Not only because of her magnanamous nature, but also because she feared that Sub-Mariner's bitterness could possibly destroy their beloved Atlantis. (Perhaps given the influence of Namora on the present day Sub-Mariner, Namor could become a popular hero.)

Doria, the teenaged cousin of Namor, accompanied him in several issues of YOUNG MEN. Although not necessarily a super heroine, this delightful blue eyed enchantress is derserving of this mention, however scant.

In modern times, of course, Sue Storm has become the Namora-influence in the Prince of the Sea's life. (However, with Sue's marriage to Reed, this may change) The lovely lady of the Fantastic Four has saved the world from doom at his mighty hands on several occassions, but, as of this writing, has not really replaced Namora or Doria. Although, perhaps the entanglement of his love life will be the death of him...what a way to go!

The fire and Water Woman- Betty Dean

Policewoman Betty Dean had no power and, other than her chosen occupation, was not an overly accented crimefighter but, much as Lois Lane must be included in a review of Superman, she must be included in a history of Lee's lovelies.

Her initial appearence in the comic world was one of the first epoch--in the sequel to the first battle of fire and water in MARVEL MYSTERY 9 and 10, she appeared in the latter issue, entreat-

ing the two deadly enemies (Namor & Torch) to come to a truce. Although her love for Namor was tempered, somewhat, by his mean disposition, Betty Dean succeeded in rehabilitating the Prince of the Seas, and, on occasion, even worked at his side on cases. The golden haired temptress, nearly as tall as the stately sea-siren, Namora, was, later, to work along side of the Human Torch; acting, along with Namora, as the lady-in-distress.

The Lovely Loner- The Blonde Phantom

This character is the only hero (or I should say, heroine) to be discussed in this article who, besides not being created as a partner for a more successful hero, lasted, continuously, through the forties and early fifties. In the fifties, however, when Marvel was axing its heroes in favor of axe-weilding demons, she was sold to Ajax-Farrel Publications where she lasted until the mid-fifties before finally being "killed".

Plain Loise Grant, blonde hair up and love for detective-boss Mark Mason down, was, when the time for action came, transformed into the beautiful Blonde Phantom. Dressed in a long red dress, trimmed in gold and with a Blask, the "Blonde Battler" was entitled "Phantom" for her speed in capturing criminals.

Managing, despite her high heels, to apprehend many a desperate criminal, the Blonde Phantom also found time to romance her boss and enlighten the pages of her own magazine, ALL WINNERS, COMICS, and Ajax's SAMSON with brilliant humor.

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There you have it--an all star line up of feminine fighters of crime emerging from the popular pages of Timely-Marvel since the early forties. Surely the world would be little changed had they not been created, but they added not only a decorative atmosphere to any comic they appeared in but also a winning appeal as super heroines--Timely's Lovely Ladies.

XXXX

GOLDEN AGE HEROES--"Capsule History"
by Raymond Miller and G.B. Love

The "Dark Knight" by Jerry Siegel & Bernard Baily was the first costumed hero in MORE FUN COMICS. Starting his career in #52, Feb., 1950, he disappeardxx after #101. In #52 & 53 it was told how Jim Corrigan, while trying to save his fiance Clarice Winston, was encased in a barrel of cement and dumped into the river while still alive. Jim's spirit rose to Heaven but God told him that he could never have eternal rest until he had wiped out all crime on the face of the earth. He returned to his body and discovered he could breathe under water and walk on it, grow or shrink to any size, become invisible, walk through walls and fly. Jim Corrigan and The Spectre could exist at the same time. The Spectre's spirit split off from Jim's and both went their own way. All this time, Jim's mortal body remaindd in the river. In MORE FUN #75 a creep called Percival Popp, the Super Cop, entered andx thus began the slow downfall of the "Green Ghost." In this issue (#75) God restores Corrigan to life but he still retains all his powers. A new Spectre isxborn and no longer do Jim and The Spectre exist at the same time. During the next few issues his original powers vanish--no more did he grow or shrink or talk with God. Then in MORE FUN #90 we find a new Spectre again. Jim enters the army and the Dark Knight battles invisible crime for the rest of his career. He also appeared in ALL STAR 1-10,12-20,22,23.

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The SPECTRE

A SUPERMAN SCRIPT (?)

by Phil Seuling

I think everyone who says modern writing in comic books is better than that of the nineteen-forties is correct. To prove my point, take Superman. He has been greatly improved over the years by the addition of many new ideas, which have built his popularity to fantastic heights. As a matter of fact, ~~x~~ I admire Superman stories so much that I wrote one myself. When I submitted it to D.C., however, they turned it down. Since I believe it represents the high quality of Superman writing present in today's comic books, I thought this was unfair, so I'm presenting it here to you. Isn't the following story a fine example of a Superman plot?

"Lois Lane's Phantom Zone Legion of Super-Brainiacs"

As our story opens Lois Lane is reading Clark Kent's article in the Daily Planet, which tells of Superman defeating Boss Freem, a Metropolis racketeer. Clark enters and asks Lois to join him for lunch. With her usual graciousness and femininity, she kicks him in the kneecap, because she believes he stole her headlines. "If I hadn't jumped out of that enraged runaway Zeppelin to get Superman's attention, he wouldn't have rescued me and coincidentally created a super-wind which coincidentally picked up Boss Freem out of a passing crowd of Lithuanian dentists on their way to a convention and coincidentally deposited him in jail! And you wouldn't have written my story!" She gives him a friendly judo chop in the Adam's apple and out she snorts. Clark faints while winking at the reader. Jimmy Olsen enters and says, "Gee!" in order to establish his unspoiled boyishness. Actually, he is an unspoiled boy of forty-seven with a toupee.

In the second panel, Perry White shouts at Clark Kent for being a coward, and tells him to stop upsetting the help (who have gathered to watch him recover) by fainting all the time. "In fact," says the kindly editor, "get the help out of here!"

Meanwhile, back on the floor, Clark has been watching Lois being kidnapped by Luthor. His super-vision enables him to watch this, but he loses sight of the getaway car when it coincidentally passes a truck carrying sheets of lead. He rises and steps into a broom closet where he changes to Superman. Everyone realizes he must be well again, because he spends half his time in broom closets when he isn't fainting, so they all leave. Superman is just about to leave when Lana Lang bursts in and says, "Don't forget - you promised to take me to lunch."

Superman telepathically sends a robot after Lois and goes to a restaurant with Lana. After they eat, Superman feels weak. "I... I...I'm losing my powers. It must be Kryptonite somewhere!" Lana laughs and says, "Yes, I fed you powdered Kryptonite, because I am really Brainiac, not Lana Lang, and now that you're dead, I'll

escape."

At this point, Superman discovers a new super-power. His super-upset stomach forces him to give a super-belch, which causes an earthquake, which coincidentally traps Brainiac in a crevice which opens at his feat.

Just then the robot arrives with Lois after having rescued her from Luthor, who actually was Mr. Mxyztplk in disguise. The Superman robot had caused him to say Zykmtpkx, (which is his own name spelled sideways) and he had disappeared into a Phantom Zone Fourth Dimension.

Lois gives Superman a bottle of bicarbonate of soda to settle his stomach, because the earthquakes are beginning to annoy people. Superman drinks it and feels better. Suddenly Lois takes a rock out of her purse and pushes it toward Superman. He immediately turns into a jar of orange marmalade, because Lois had found a new form of Kryptonite - polka-dot Kryptonite, and this new form turns Superman into orange marmalade.

Lois begins to spread Superman on a piece of toast, because she is really Luthor in disguise, but the jar is knocked out of her hand by Blimpo, the super-hippopotamus. The hippo had been on the planet Krypton when it exploded and coincidentally a meteor carrying him had landed on earth.

Supergirl arrives and carries the jar of marmalade away from the polka-dot Kryptonite. It turns back into Superman, who is in good shape again, but a little sticky.

Suddenly he gets an emergency signal from Jimmy Olsen. He rushes to the Daily Planet where Jimmy tells him that Lois is being dropped into the ocean by Boss Freem's boys. Boss Freem had called Perry White from prison to tell him, and actually Perry had given the signal.

When Superman arrives, Lois had already been rescued by Perry White, who is actually Lori Lemaris the mermaid, in disguise. Jimmy says he knew it all along, because ever since Perry signaled Superman, Jimmy's signal device had smelled fishy.

Superman carries everyone to his Fortress of Solitude so they can recuperate. There they discover that Kandor is gone, bottle and all. Jimmy remembers that Luthor is responsible. Luthor had stolen Kandor, painted it to look like a bottle of bicarbonate of soda, and given it to Superman for his upset stomach. They rush back to the restaurant, where they find that Kandor is still there, except for a candy store, half a super-highway, and a middle-income housing development, which by now Superman has digested.

Lois and Lana begin to argue about which one Superman has a date with, and they demand that he make a choice. His final choice is Lena Lump, a redhead he had gone steady with in the Smallville Orphanage as a child of three. She is a Bizarro.

Everyone cheers, including the Lithuanian dentists, who are really the Legion of Superheroes in disguise.

It turns out to be an imaginary tale.

FINIS

FLASH GORDON

By Ed Lahmann

How does one write an article on the comic strip, FLASH GORDON? It is plain to see by all followers of this strip that any attempt to do so would surely fall short of a complete treastise. Indeed it would seem that only by compiling a cataloged volume of facts and analysis could one hope to do this feature justice. Perhaps the best way would be to publish the complete run of Alex Raymond sunday pages in book form and let each individual reader form his or her own private interpertation. I'm going to try and cover the strip as best I can in this writing.

FLASH GORDON was published in a series of thirteen Whitman BIG LITTLE BOOKS and I am going to use them as a basis of reference when need be and also to point out various phases in the FLASH GORDON feature. Below are listed the titles of the thirteen BIG LITTLE BOOKS and their approximate publication dates to serve as your guide to the different periods under discussion:

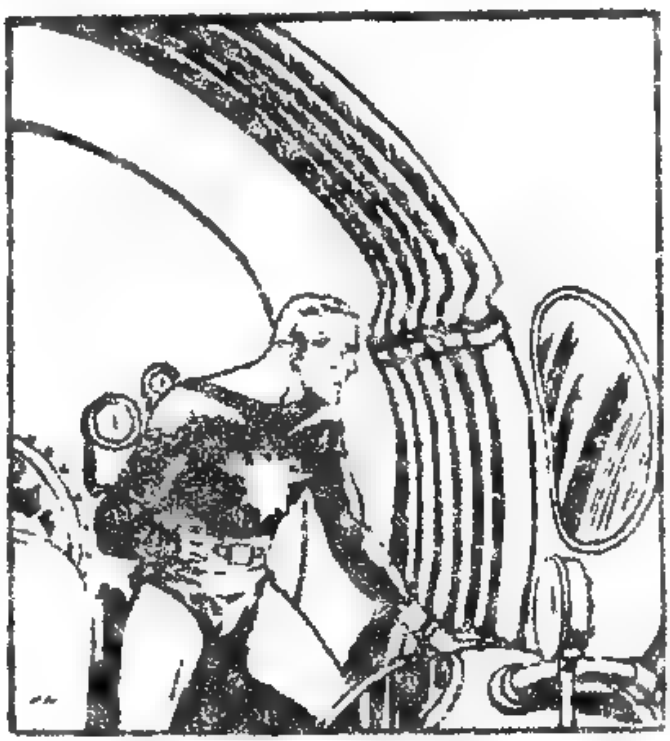
ON THE PLANET MONGO	1934
MONSTERS OF MONGO	1935
TOURNAMENTS OF MONGO	1935
WITCH QUEEN OF MONGO	1936
WATER WORLD OF MONGO	1936
FOREST KINGDOM OF MONGO	1937
PERILS OF MONGO	1938
TYRANT OF MONGO	1939
ICEWORLD OF MONGO	1939
POWERMEN OF MONGO	1940
RED SWORD INVADERS	1945
JUNGLES OF MONGO	1946
THE FIERY DESERT OF MONGO	1948

With this introduction behind us let us then begin to look over the many different facets of a classic comic strip feature.

First, let us arrive at the why of it. Why did this strip catch on? BUCK ROGERS had been the first of the comic strips to deal with super-science and had proved quite successful--people still liked to speculate on the future. ROGERS was of the Earth two thousand-five hundred years removed from the time of Christ, FLASH GORDON, however,

was a present day hero, but aided by said super-science, stranded on a run-away planet careening on its lost course through space. This planet, called Mongo, was a mixture of Rogers' future and the forest primevil. High adventure and progressively fine art made the FG strip a superb space opera. The essence of the movie serial, with its cliff hanging situatêons, also prevailed. The originality of thought that went into this feature was another of its strong points. Mongo was a planet of many different peoples, the characterazation of which were most finely brought out. From the exotic to the brutish, from the highly intelligent to the savage and ignorant, from the seas to the heavens; the all encompassing theme of Flash Gordon reached out and took in anything that presented itself as a story or plot material. With so much going for it, such a strip had to catch on and so with the fore-goirg thoughts, we have why. Now, after reaching the why of it, we begin to think of how this strip came to be. Who was responsible for such a work of high merit in the field of comic art. Who?

The who of it was Alex Raymond, artist-creator of our subject in question. At anm early age Raymond showed his artistic abilities and his father sent him on to art school. With the death of his father, Alex went into Wall Street as a brokers clerk. The crash of 1929 saw many without oppertunity but Alex Raymond, even though his career as a prospective broker was through, still had his God given talent as an artist. A native of New Rochelle, New York, he went to see a neighbor there who was a professional cartoonist. The neighbor was Russ Westover, who did Tillie The Toiler. Russ got Alex a job with King Features Syndicate and as a staff artist, he was tutored under the wings of the Young Brothers, Murat&Lyman. Teaming up with Dashiel Hamett, of Thin Man fame, Alex illustrated the Secret AGENT X-9 strip. Late in 1933 saw Raymond introduce his memorable Flash Gordon. A little over a year later his other famous strip, Jungle Jim was introduced as a top piece to his now popular Flash Gordon.epic. Alex now stood as the only comic artist to have illustrated three successful features. Milton Caniff, in 1947, joined Raymond when he brought upon the scene his Steve Canyon creation, as the only other cartoonist to achieve triple honors. A year later Alex Raymond was home from the military service, where he had been since 1946. While he was gone Flash and Jim were taken over by other artists and upon his return Alex had no desire to go back to his old characters sok he just up and created a new character that was more in keeping with his more mature intellectual outlook on life.



Flash Found Himself a Prisoner

RIP KIRBY was the new brainchild and it was an immediate hit. Alex had given the comic world number four and now stood alone as the master comic creator of all time. MXX X-9 (which by the way, was a daily, as opposed to his other work being sundays), FLASH GORDON, JUNGLE JIM, RIP KIRBY--all classics in their own right. It all ended a few short years after the inception of the RIP KIRBY strip in the flaming wreckage of an automobile. Alex Raymond was no more. His work lives on as an inspiration to all aspiring comic strip artists. A master at his trade, it seems a misnomer to call him a comic strip artist, for he was indeed a dramatic arts illustrator. His original art is among the most prized of collectors items and when he was referred to as the modern Jules Verne, it didn't begin to describe the true over-all concept of the man that was Alex Raymond.

The why and the, having now been covered, we go to the what. Now any one of Raymond's strips could be covered, or, for that matter, all of them but I chose to confine my writings to FLASH GORDON, his recognized masterpiece. Flash was an athelete. First referred to as an international polo player, and later, as an All-American football player, that was of little consequence as the fact that Flash was an athelete was the important thing. The story opens with a newspaper headline blaring forth news of a comet about to crash into the Earth. The world is awaiting its impending doom. A noted scientist, Dr. Hans Zarkov, has hopes of deflecting the comet, (which is really a planet) with a rocket he has designed. Flash, on board a plane, sits across the isle from a beautiful girl named Dale Arden. The plane crashes and the two passengers drop by parachute onto Dr. Zarkov's estate. (I would like to note here that the early pages were crude. They possessed the beginners eagerness to get on with the story and so many of the finer points were neglected. For example, no mention was ever made of the planes' pilot, either before or after the crash. Flash never had a first name other than Flash and very little of his background was ever brought out. The same held true for Dale and Dr. Zarkov. The early pages are presented in ON THE PLANET MONGO (Editors note: The scenes reproduced throughout this article are also from this story). Raymond's art was good even at this time, but it was still abstract. The style was reminicent of Lyman Young but this was no doubt because of his influence on the young Alex.) Flash and Dale are forced by Zarkov to go with him on the rocket to the planet Mongo. The doctor has become unbalanced due to mental strain and he fights with Flash on board the rocket. (Raymond's ability with anatomy and action is brought out in this sequence early in the strip. This scene is reproduced on the next page.) They crash on Mongo and Flash and Dale escape alive. (No mention is made of Zarkov at this time.) Because the story continues, it is assumed that the planet misses Earth. (no mention is made of this either. Alex's youth shows through or maybe his inexperience.) No sooner are they down than they are confront by a grotesque reptile of monsterous proportions. When death seems eminant, a second such beast enters the situation and while the animals are fighting, our adventurers make good their getaway. (This is to become one of the many reacurring features of the FLASH GORDON

Flash's Powerful Right Slammed Home

strip. Monsters of all shapes and x sizes. Our hero fought and conquered them all at one time or another. It has been said that monsters were his meat.) No sooner are they safe from the beasts than a sky patrol lands, kills the reptiles, and takes our hero and heroine as their prisoners. They are taken to the false emperor of Mongo, "Ming, The Merciless." (This name alone, was to set the stage for a continueing tale of suspense and grand action.) Immediately upon seeing Flash and Dale, Ming Claims Dale for his bride and condemns Flash to death at the hands of the "Red Monkey Men of Mongo." Suffice it to say that Flash disposes of said monkek men. Ming has a daughter, Aura, who sets her sights on our hero and she helps him escape from her father, but Dale still remains his prisoner. This is to be the pattern for the strip. Capture, escape, recapture, monsters, and geographic location. Raymond's art style remained the same until about half way through this first book.

This brings us to what I all, the re-discovery of Dr. Zarkov. It seems a pretender to the throne of Mongo has been holding the doctor captive. The pretender, Prince Barin (who is actually the rightful heir to said throne) saves Aura and Flash from a constrictor plant and plans to have Zarkov and Flash kill each other in a duel with poison daggers. It is there that the two earthmen find each other again. (Raymond never said how the good doctor regained his senses but little did it matter because it was in this sequence that a noticeable change was coming over the style of our artist. The Abstractionism was disappearing and careful shading technique was making it's first showing. The anatomy was better and the background work was becoming more detailed.) New characters were introduced in this book; the Hawkmen of Mongo. Also, many of the action poses that appeared in this book were the ones later copied by other artists. One scene showed a burning gladiator referred to as a "Human Torch." By the end of MONSTERS OF MONGO the art was becoming very ornate. (Perhaps to much so. To my eye Raymond was still not at his peak.) The Hawkmen started as foes of Flash but ended as his friends. They rescue Dale and our three friends are together at the close of MONSTERS OF MONGO.

In 1938 a movie serial was made titled "Flash Gordon Goes to Mars", starring Buster Crabbe. This was some three years after MONSTERS OF MONGO but the movie was reminicent of this period in the FG feature. (A picture on page 351 of MONSTERS shows FLASH and DALE falling through space and the resemblance here between our hero and Crabbe is most pronounced.) For some reason MONSTERS is more difficult to

come by than the first book ON THE PLANET MONGO.(Many collectors consider this the best segment in the series but I myself don't feel that way.) From MONSTERS we go to the TOURNAMENTS OF MONGO and some very exciting work in the epic strip.

Raymond's work was now very complex and his figure drawings were superb. Sex abounded in his strip and also much blood and guts. The strip of this period would never pass today's code authority. On page 87 of TOURNAMENTS we find a battle scene that surely must be listed as one of the most ambitious panels ever drawn by Alex. The sheer power of Raymond's art was evident all through this book and the present style prevailed through thâx next book, THE WITCH QUEEN OF MONGO. In TOURNAMENTS RAYMOND has Flash and Barin duel on a high wire over a pool of death. He used this same idea in MONSTERS with the same two participants. (I wonder if at the time he was at a loss for a new idea or if he liked the idea and wanted to use it again with a new variation.) Both such events were very exciting the way they were handled and it didn't seem to hurt the continuity any that a repitition was used. This repititive style was to infiltrate the strip many times at later intervals. This was the first such happening. It is in this sequence that FLASH gets shed of Aura. She winds up with Barin and Dale is secure with FLASH. The romance of Dale and Flash was always at the test, but, they always wound up together. Probably the most severe such test was in the next Big Little Book to appear, THE WITCH QUEEN OF MONGO.

Azura, the Witch Queen succeeds in putting Flash under her power by way of a drug. She is indeed a witch, having many strange powers. Dale is made a servant in Azura's calling and she does not know Flash is drugged. Azura commands the attentions of our hero and Dale misunderstands. Shock of Dale's maltreatment at the hands of Azura brings Flash to his senses and all ends well. That is to say, all ends well in respect to the love and romance department. Things are still up for grabs in Azura's kingdom, The Kingdom of Blue Magic. Flash forces Azura to take her own drug and proceeds with Zarkov's help to take over the kingdom. (An interesting part in this book is during a sequence where Flash saves Azura from the cave of death dwarfs. Flash is made invisible by Zarkov for this task. In the artwork Flash is completely unseen except for his shadow. Phil Davis later used this technique on Mandrake.) Between TOURNAMENTS and WITCH QUEEN there was a gap that would have to be filled by the Sunday pages and this same thing is prevalent between QUEEN and WATERWORLD. Here is where we come to another noticeable change in the art style of Alex Raymond. More polish and a finer line are evident. We are now coming to the period of art I consider to be Raymond's best. A bit of the draftsman and still much of the inspiration that shows the exuberence of the creator. We are now flying over the sea of Mystery, THE WATERWORLD OFx MONGO, with our three earthlings, Flash, Dale, and Zarkov.

THE WATERWORLD OF MONGO was unique in that it featured covers

illustrated by Henry Vallely, a fine Big Little Book artist and also of Lone Ranger fame. The undersea kingdom was also ruled by woman, Undina by name. It seems Raymond favored a matriarchy, A heat ray from below the surface brings our flyers down and Flash drowns. Yes, a comic first--a hero drowns. But, we are on Mongo with its super-science. Undina revives him, but he has become a water breather and cannot rejoin his friends on the surface. In time though, they join him by means of Undina's converter and they become water breathers too. The plot here is restricted somewhat but Alex makes the most of it. (I feel this was a fairly weak segment of the strip, storywise, that is. Raymond must have felt the same as he was not long in getting our trio out of the sea. Flash had been underwater before, in the first book against the sharkmen, and this aspect just didn't seem to fit in. (It might be noted in the first underwater episode with the sharkmen, Flash wore a diving type helmet.) Alex tried it twice--the second time was better but still weak.) In this area we find fodder for other things once again. Bill Everett's Sub-Mariner was one such thing, as example. Out of the sea and into the air once more, we have our friends flying into the pinnacle of Alex Raymond's efforts. I consider the next Big Little Book to be Raymond at his best. Strong plot and text, absolutely exquisite artwork both inside and on the covers. Presenting, THE FOREST KINGDOM OF MONGO, Alex Raymond's legacy to the society of Flash Gordon collectors.

I'm not going to go into too much detail on THE FOREST KINGDOM but I would like to try coverage of a well-rounded variety on the overall concept of this segment. Flash, Dale, and Zarkov engage Ming's air patrol over the forest and are shot doen. Here they are at the mercy of nature's primitive rage. Zarkov is bitten by a flying squirllon, an animal whose bite is maddening. Zarkov runs pell-mell into the forest and is lost from our story once agsin. He is, however, picked up by Barin's forresters. (Barin was given the Forest Kingdom by Ming for his showing in the Tournaments. He is also now married to Ming's daughter, Aura. Much of the connecting links to the story were left out between the different books. Barin's situation was never fully explained in the BIG LITTLE BOOKS.) Alone in the forest Flash and Dale are captured by a savage tribe called Tusk Men. Because of his hunting ability Flash promotes himself to chief of the Tuskers. The old chief, jealous of him, subdues our hero, and Dale, and sells them as slaves to Barin. With our characters together again, the old triangle of Aura, Dale, and Flash is evident but nothing serious develops. The primary plot here is about a spy of Mings', named Grombo, who kidnaps Barin and betrays Flash's presence in the forest to Ming. Flash rescues Barin and Grombo is supposedly burned alive. This is dispelled later in PERILS OF MONGO. An interesting group of horned ape men are introduced in this phase of the story. The thing I liked abat the FOREST KINGDOM was the way Raymond used both aspects of Mongo, the primitive and the highly civilized. The monster concept was also utilized to the fullest capacity. (Raymond introduced a monster

"Away with Her!" the Emperor Ordered

called a giant Magnoped that was a gem. A huge elephant-like creature with a double trunk.) Action was the byword in this book, especially in the primitive areas. In the later stages of this book the draftsman abilities of Raymond began to overtone his original executions. This form of art was prevalent on through the PERILS. I hated to see the classic style slowly dissolving out the new style was also easy on the eye. The costuming in the latter stages of FOREST was outstanding. The sweeping flow of drapery was as it was in TOURNAMENTS and in QUEEN but more clean cut with less of the not needed excess ornamentation. Backgrounds were now at a peak. Advancing now to the PERILS I'd like to digress from the Big Little Books for a moment to bring out a couple of interesting points. The first will pertain to Sawyers' Viewmaster Flash Gordon reels. In 1963 they brought out a viewmaster packet of three reels about Flash. I don't know who did the art but it was a commendable job. The reels try, as best they can, to cover the many aspects of the original strip and, of course, it has to fall short. One scene is an exact copy from PERILS except that wings have been added to Mings' cohorts. The 3-demensional cartoon effect comes off rather well.

I would also like to point out Harvey Publications FLASH GORDON reprints in the early fifties. The first three of four books contained in cronological order work by Alex Raymond from the POWERMEN throught the RED SWORD. The fourth book broke the order and went back to reproduce parts from THE PERILS. Grombo was there and the recovery of Zarkov from the bite of the Squirllon was told. This fourth Harvy issue was, by far, the best, and though a fifth issue was advertised it never came out, at least to my knowledge.

Flash Attacked the Gyro Leader

In PERILS, Raymond showed some real scrip inginuity. In one sequence Ming thinks he has succeeded in electrocuting Flash. He has him buried and on the

tomb he has inscribed "Here lies Flash Gordon". Of,course, Flash gets out and leaves for Ming this ingenius message. Altering Ming's inscription with black paint, Flash leaves the following:

MING
"HERE LIES! - FLASH GORDON"

Raymond was maturing at this time and the draftsman was more evident than ever.

The next two Big Little Books, TYRANT OF MONGO and ICEWORLD OF MONGO, were pure examples of the draftsman's art. So much so that these two titles were used to make up the goodly part of that elusive collector's item, DELL FOUR COLOR #10. The art of this period was like photographic perfection.in the panels of the FOUR COLOR. The art of this period was no doubt, technically speaking, the best Raymond ever turned out but I myself happen to prefer his more classic style of the FOREST KINGDOM. A noted art critic of the time said that Alex Raymond;s art of this period in its super finish had none to compare with it. His art during this time was the style so successfully imitated by Sheldon Moldoff, who did some of DC' Publications finest artwork of the early forties. Again, Raymond reverted to the Matriarch, for the ruler of the ICEWORLD was a woman, Fria, by name. The Forest Kingdom was now called Arboria--as Raymond began to tie in all the loose ends about now and also bring out some of the neglected details.

In moving to reflect upon the POWERMEN sequence, I wish to use as reference the three mentioned issues by Harvey Publications. I'm doing this because I now want to go into Raymond's color application. At first his color wokk was basic and contrasted color against color. As his art took on the classic style, the black overshadowed the color. With Tyrant and ICE-WORLD, and the draftsmans touch the color came into its own. In the POWERMEN sequence we find blending and overtones.-his color application was no doubt at its peak here. Raymond was still using the style copied by Moldoff at this time so it was no accident that Shelley's color work was always top drawer. This precision style lent itself well to color technique. In the POWERMEN episode, Mongo's indutry was given fron stage. The scenes in the steel mills with the reflected light from molten metals brought out color art to a great extent. A lesser man than Alex would not have used the color potential here that he so wisely displayed. This clean cut style lasted until just before the episode of the RED SWORD. A new idea was beginning to make its presence felt.

Alex Raymond was now using live models and in doing so he was making his figures longer, especially from the waist down--he was streamlining his art. The full effect was still not in evidence, nor would it be for awhile yet. The 2nd World War was going on and so Raymond, as did most of the cartoonists, wanted his hero connected with it, and to do this he had to bring peace to Mongo. This he did. Ming was finally defeated and Barin

restored to his rightful throne. Zarkov builds a rocket and the trio of space travelers regain their home planet Earth. With the science of Mongo behind them they help the United States defeat the Red Sword invaders. Raymond has been given credit for designing women's wedgie shoes at about this time. It is also said that Chic Young named Baby Dumpling, Alexander after his now highly successful protage. The Red Sword defeated and the war about over Raymond decides to send his three adventurers back to Mongo. This brings us to the installment titled THE JUNGLES OF MONGO.

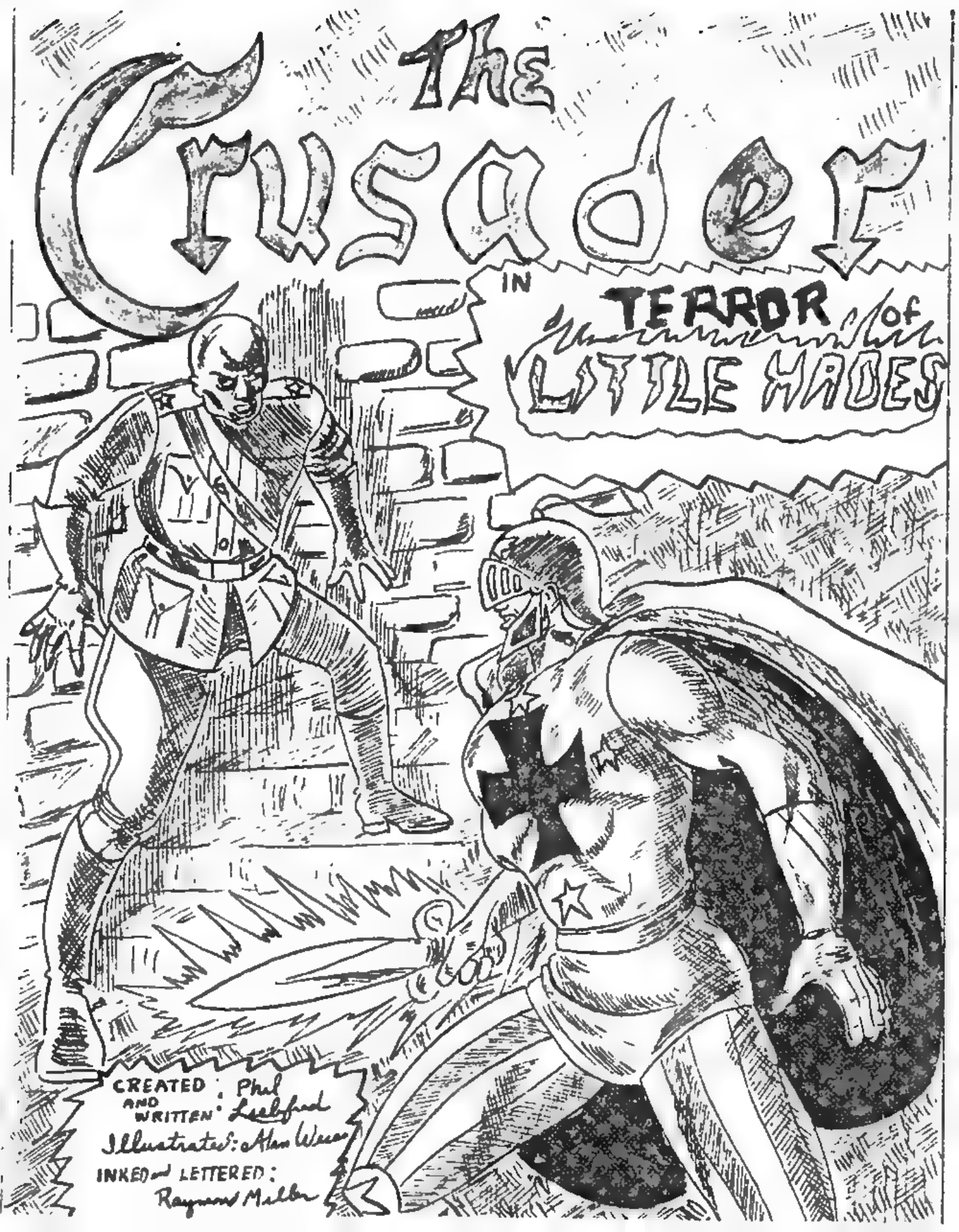
I have never seen too much material of this period but that which I have seen has led me to believe Raymond was beginning to tire of Flash Gordon. It had been a long old road and the inspiration was gone, and the color was half hearted. Perhaps he was looking ahead to Rip Kirby or maybe he was thinking of going into the military service, which is what he finally did, but, not until one more Big Little Book segment was completed. So, here we are at the end of the BLB line, THE FIERY DESERT OF MONGO. This was another sequence carried in the DELL FOUR COLOR series, #84, as a matter of fact. The color was awful. Far too much use of the base yellows and wide blank background areas. Flash Gordon had run the gamut from beginners exuberance to classic heights, to tedious application and a sense of duty to the public rather inspirational existance.

The character of Flash Gordon was more than that of an adventurer. He became a symbol of liberation against all types of tyranny. He became a stimulating challenge to readers' imaginations and questions of other planets and worlds beyond ours. Flash was a pillar of strength in the face of adversity. He was that which most all boys in their youth like to identify with. Perhaps he was not too far from that which was his creator, Alex Raymond.

When Alex at last returned from the military service to do his new creation, Rip Kirby, a new style was readily apparent. The new style was one of art that gave the viewer an impression rather than a photographic effect. This to was the old inspirational artwork but of a different school of thought. This, however, isw another story and perhaps I will tell my interpertation of it someday. For now, I will take leave of the greatest Tour De' Force on space ever to appear on the comic pages, Flash Gordon.

ADDENTA:
Aside from what I have already written here it might be noteworthy to mention for the information of new fans of Alex Raymond that Flash Gordon appeared in the pages of KING COMICS. Jungle Jim appeared in ACE COMICS. AGENT-X9 was published in two books by David McKay in 1934. These were the only two comic books this strip ever appeared in as done by Alex. Rip Kirby appeared in FEATURE BOOK #51 and the last few issues of KING COMICS. There are also tapes of the old Flash Gordon and Jungle Jim radio shows in existance. Noted fan and collector Bill White has all of the Flash Gordon sunday pages.

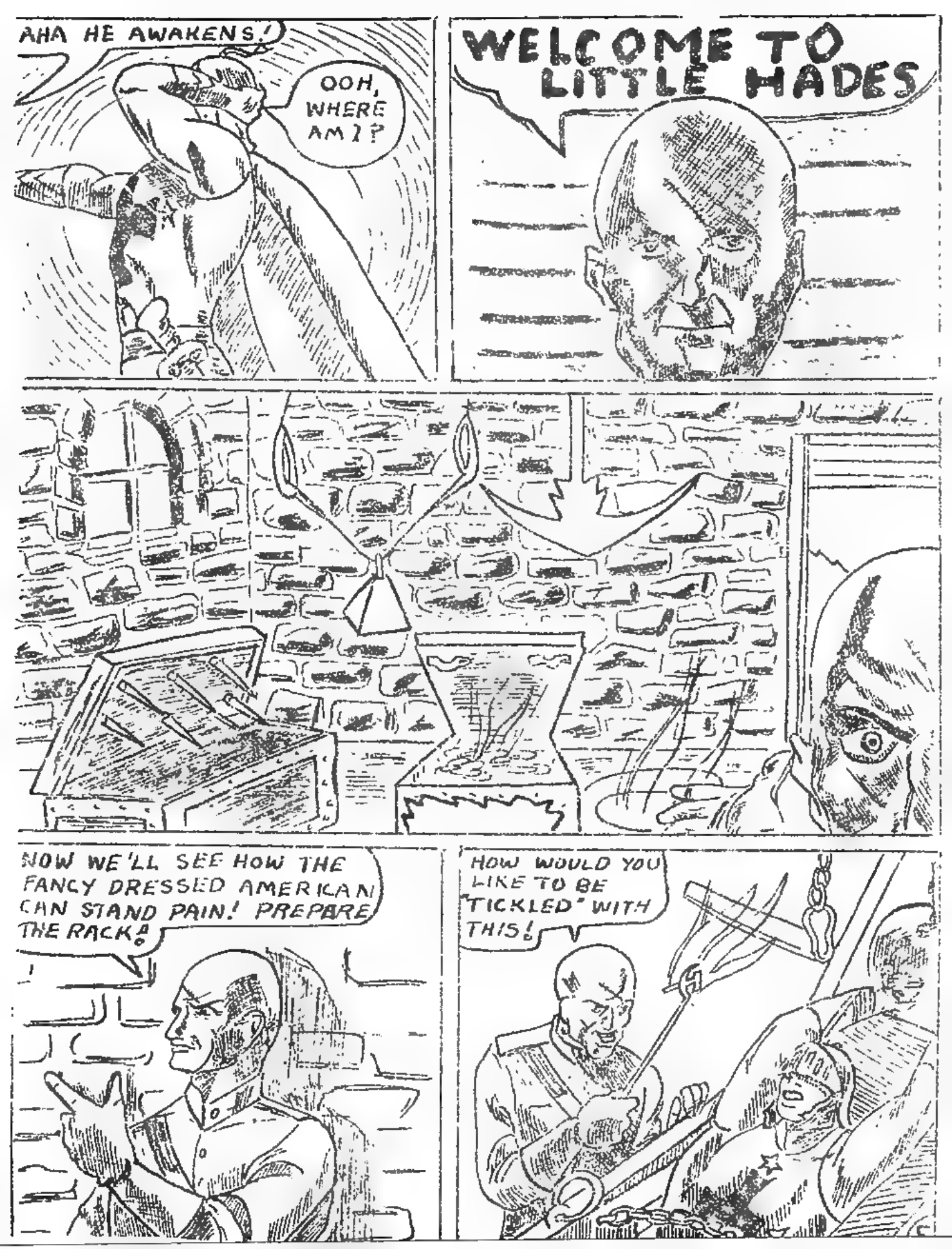
The End


The Crusader
IN
TERROR of LITTLE HADES
CREATED AND WRITTEN: Phil Seuling
Illustrated: Alan Weiss
INKED and LETTERED: Raymond Miller

OUR STORY OPENS IN WASH. D.C....
TO BAD ABOUT C.P.L. AVERY HUH JOE? FUNNY ABOUT HIS BODY, IT WAS NEVER FOUND. MUST HAVE BEEN WASHED OUT TO SEA!
YEAH. I KNEW HIM PERSONALLY
BUT AT THIS VERY MOMENT, C.P.L. ROY AVERY IS VERY MUCH ALIVE AS THE "CRUSADER" WATCHING HIS NATIONAL SONAR SCREEN TO SEE WHERE AMERICA'S ENEMIES ARE STRIKING-
HMM, BLINKING BY THE GOV'T PLANT IN THE HILLS OUTSIDE TOWN.
MEANWHILE, BY THE PLANT,
COME, COMRADES, TIME TO ROB PLANT IN USUAL MANNER
FIND THE PLANS
YES MAP
NEXT MOMENT
I'M HIT!
THE GUARDS HANS IS HIT!! BEAT IT!

I GOT ONE OF 'EM. LET'S LAM DOWN THAT MAN HOLE!
DIRTY CAPITALIST GUARD!
AAAAARGH
WHAT HAPPENED?
RED SPY AND HIS CRONIES - STOP THEM ESCAPED WITH VITAL ROCKET PLANS - WE GOT ONE OF THEM..
MP
THEY GOT AWAY DOWN THAT MAN HOLE! WHO ARE YOU?
I'M THE Crusader! AND THANKS!
SO HE WENT DOWN HERE, EH, JUST THE PLACE FOR HIM AND HIS RED RATS!

ELL, HERE GOES MY FIRST RACK AT KEEPING FREEDOM - OME LAYOUT.' NEVER KNEW EWERS IERE SO NTRICATE!
SURE IS HUMID!
WHAT'S THAT!
UICK, FOOL, I THINK SOME NE IS FOLLOWING US.
WAIT MAP - I GOT AN IDEA.
HEY THERE! WHAT HAPPENED? YOU OKAY?
AP, HE AND HIS EN DRAGGED ME HERE ND LEFT ME WHEN HEY HEARD YOU COMING.
YOU OKAY FELLA?
DA!
WHAOOH

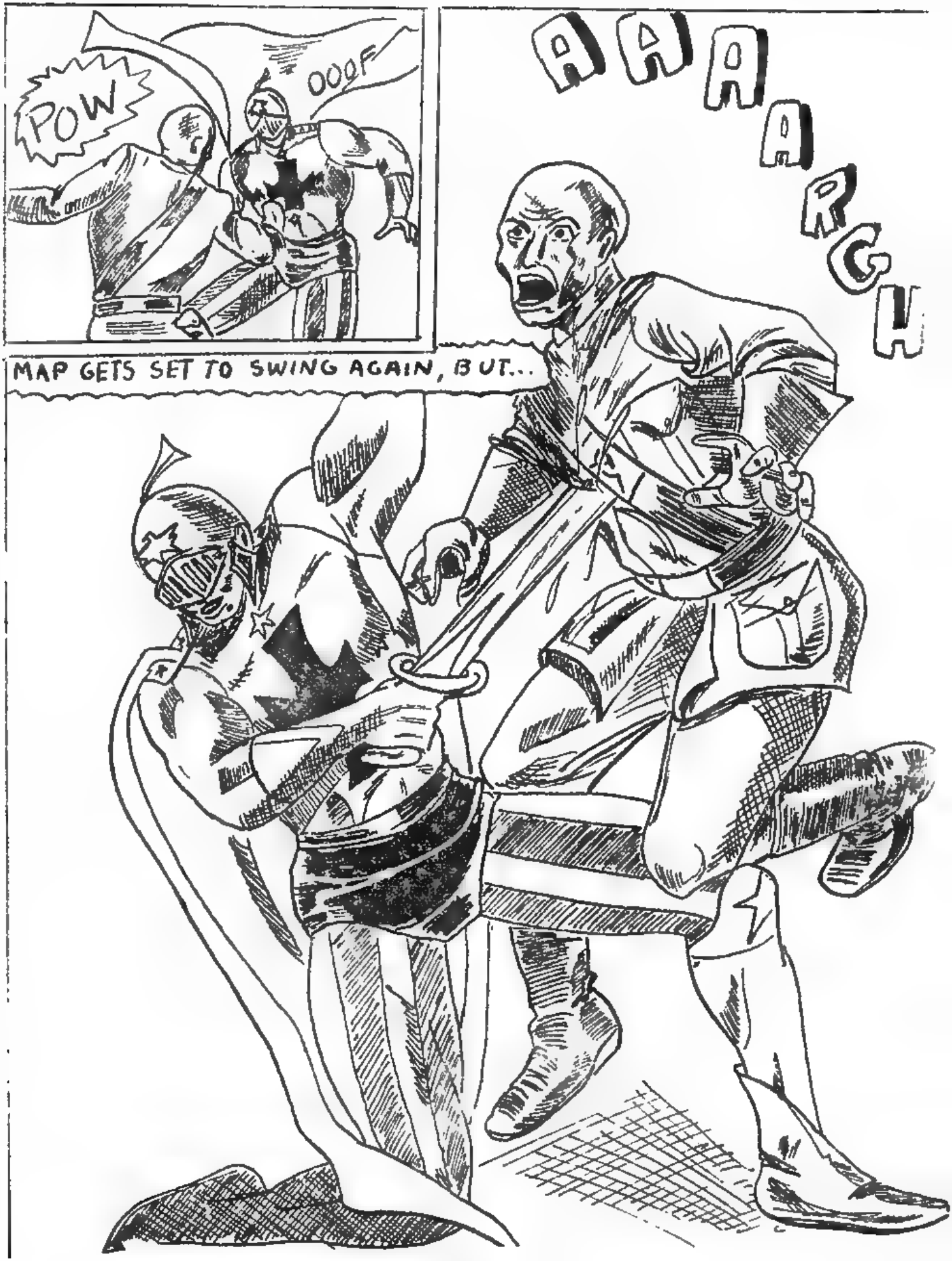

AHA HE AWAKENS!
OOH, WHERE AM I?
WELCOME TO LITTLE HADES
NOW WE'LL SEE HOW THE FANCY DRESSED AMERICAN CAN STAND PAIN! PREPARE THE RACK!
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE "TICKLED" WITH THIS!

IS IT WORTH DOING FOR OLD GLORY, THAT THING LOOKS AWFUL HOT!
ME AND MY BIG IDEAS! SOME BUSINESS BEING A SUPER HERO!
BUT I'M NO HERO YET!
I'M GETTING GOOSE PIMPLES! SHOULD I OR A...
THE ANSWER COMES AS THE CRUSADER SNAPS HIS BONDS..
PIN THIS, BOYS!

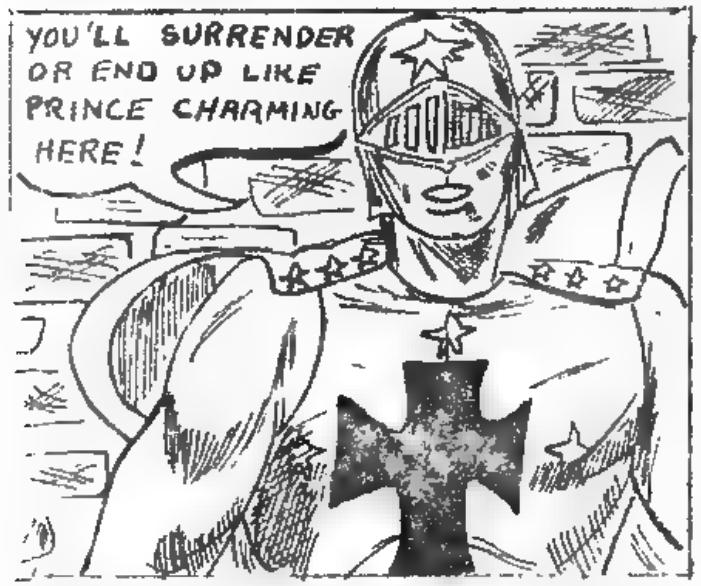
WE ARE LOOSING TIME. TIE HIM OVER ACID PIT AND LEAVE A GUARD!
GEE, ONE WHOLE GUARD!
IS BETTER YOU KEEP MOUTH SHUT ELSE YOU NEVER OPEN IT AGAIN.
OH, SO THAT GOT YOU THINKING THAT YOU'LL ALWAYS WIN, HUH?
SHUT UP OR I'LL RUN YOU THROUGH!

THANK YOU FRIEND
THIS BAYONET WILL CUT ME FREE
BUT YOU WILL STILL FALL IN ACID!
I THINK NOT!
NOW FOR A BIT OF TARZANIA
NOW TO STOP THE MAP FROM PULLING ANOTHER JOB

MEANWHILE!
FOOL BECAUSE OF YOUR STUPIDITY WE HAVE TO RETREAT
SUDDENLY
SO YOU'D KILL YOUR OWN MEN! WELL, MATCH YOUR GUNS AGAINST MY SWORD.
GET HIM!
I'LL NOT FAIL!
BANG
PWING
BAM BAM
THE BULLETS! THEY BOUNCE OFF HIS SWORD


POW
OOOF
AAAARGH
MAP GETS SET TO SWING AGAIN, BUT...

LOOK! THE MAP IS DEAD! WHAT'LL WE DO?


YOU'LL SURRENDER OR END UP LIKE PRINCE CHARMING HERE!

LATER AT THE POLICE STATION...
BUT CRUSADER, HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE DANGER WILL STRIKE?
AFTER GETTING MY POWERS AND SETTING UP MY BASE MY NATIONAL SONAR SCREEN WAS ALREADY THERE.

THEN YOU WON'T NEED ANY KIND OF SIGNAL?
NO, BUT YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN I'LL NEED POLICE AID, YOU COPS ARE INVALUABLE!
the End

A L T E R E G O No. 7

The first edition of this fantastic issue was a complete and utter sellout and has already become a collector's item. Howeverm by special arrangement with Roy Thomas, it has been reprinted by THE SFCA and this 2nd edition is now available for ~~x~~ 85¢ per copy. If you missed the first printing, then by all means do not miss the 2nd. Printed photo offset throughout, here is what this issue contains;

AND THAT WAS THE END OF SOLOMON GRUNDY: This is the first in a series of articles on the Justice Society from ALL STAR COMICS. This one is written by Richard Kyle with art by Ronn Foss and Biljo White.

ALTER & CAPT. EGO: A great new costume hero strip written and drawn by Biljo White.

THE FIRST GREAT DAYS OF THE HUMAN TORCH: by Rick Strong with art by White.

ONE MAN'S FAMILY--THE SAGA OF THE MIGHTY MARVELS: An extra long epic on Capt. Marvel, Capt. Marvel Jr., and Mary Marvel written by Roy Thomas and profusely illustrated by Biljo White.

SHEL SILVERFISH LOOKS AT THE GILDED AGE OF COMICS: by Roy Thomas.

THE TRAGIC MONSTER: Written and illustrated by E. Nelson Birdwell.

READERS WRITE: Letters from such people as Otto Binder, Sid Greene, Gardner Fox.

PHOTOS OF JOY HOLIDAY

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XXXX

SOUNDING OFF
by Rick Weingroff

WHAT ARCHIE CAN DO WITH HIS ADVENTURE SERIES!

Though the prophets of doom in fandom had announced the premature death of the Fly and Jaguar, sole remnants of the old Archie Adventure Series, recent developements indicate that not only are the two super heroes very much alive (the Fly, anyway),but are now accompanied by two new comics,THE SHADOW and YOUNG DOCTOR MASTERS. Minus any improvements, the Fly has returned and will probably stir up more of the anti-Archie vehemence which characterized his first four year stint in the comic world; and THE SHADOW will certainly stir up similar controversy as those who recall his former glory compare the current, anemic version to the original.

Though Radio Comics has not appeased fandom in any way, it has indicated its willingness to publisher super and hero adventure hero comics--and for this it should not only be praised but encouraged. The situation in comic books indicates that the need in the industry is to appeal to as many different tastes as is possible, rather than rely on one major style, as was the case in 1946 when the Comics Crash predicated the end of such a policy. Survival in the industry can be had by presenting a line with a broad appeal--romance, war, humor, funny annimal, super hero, and detective. This builds readership by attracting people interested in all of these categories. Even as important as this broad appeal, is an attempt to attract different age groups. If fandom had its way, all comics would be geared toward the teenager-preferably of the more mature sort - and sadly this would be a mistake for the industry. For if the publishers depended on teenagers (of the mature variety) to support them, a greater number of bankrupcies would have occured than have in the past. Certainly there is a large teenage audience - but this is a restricted audience; and by appealing only to this group, comic publishers would miss the largest number of readers, those who are most impressed not only by the comic book format but by comic book logic. Therefore, by having comics which have a broad-based appeal--to the teenager, the adult, the pre-teenager, the very young, et cetera--the publishers assure themselves of a larger audience.

Therefore, any publisher who broadens the base of appeal, will ultimately better the comic book industry and, as the charter of The Academy of Comic Book Fans and Collectors expresses in its "General Purposes," "The Academy shall encourage and promote the growth and development of comic books as a popular art form." If the comic book format can be promoted best by appealing to all fans--rather than just the limited cliche known as fandom - than it is fandom's stated purpose to back the move.

WHAT FANDOM CAN DO WITH ITS ALLEY POLLS

The Alley Poll remains the least representative indices of comic

reader interest being taken. Though it clearly indicates fandom's preference, it fails to indicate what the general comic reader prefers - and the poll therefore holds little validity when considered by publishers. Because of fandom's oft-stated belief in the maturity of all comic readers, the Academy's favorite poll has failed to even approximate the one true index of comic reader taste -- namely, sales charts!

If quality is the "degree of excellence which a thing possesses" (Webster's New World Dictionary) and if the only way to determine excellence of comic material is by reader reaction, then only the sales charts represent reader opinion on quality, and therefore only sales charts indicate true comic book quality. Comic book quality must be judged in relation to the audience to which the comic book appeals mainly; and for this reason the Alley Poll is invalid when projected over all the comic readers in the world. Because comic readers in general buy what they think is best, quality can be determined by what sells the most--not by what fandom buys.

Certainly there must be some amazing inaccuracy evident when Spiderman outstrips Superman as the Best Adventure Hero! Sales indicate that the Man of Steel remains the World's Greatest Adventure Hero; and it is beyond all possibilities that any hero could defeat him in a truly representative poll.

Yet another glaring inaccuracy between fandom and all comic readers is shown in the fact that Adam Strange placed fifth (last year) in the category, "Top Ten Heroes:" but has since been replaced by Space Ranger on the cover of MYSTERY IN SPACE. This is not, as has been surmised, the result of stupidity on Jack Schiff's part; TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED sold almost as well last yearm as MYSTERY IN SPACE. Unlike the highly-complicated Adam Strange, Space Ranger combines the terrestrial activities of the future with easy-to-understand story development; and though Space Ranger has now begun to dominate MYSTERY IN SPACE, fandom failed to rank the character in the top ten.

Yet another inaccuracy in the poll reflecting poorly on fandom in general, is the fact that the Justice Society, after only two issues and a rather lack-lustre adventure (which was neither better nor worse than any other M JLA story when taken on face value), outranked the Justice League of America in "Top Ten Groups" (last year). Though the Justice League remains one of the most popular comic books in existence, fandom allowed the Justice Society's former glamour to cloud its vision. How could any publisher take this voting seriously?

Give me sales charts any day!

THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING, OR WHERE WERTHAM CAN GO FROM HERE

Fredric Wertham's sincere, but misguided, campaign against the comic books was based mainly on the assumption that the alarming rise in crime was attributable to the concomitant rise in the production of crime and horror comic books. America, in its search for an easy solution to the ethical, sociological, and

athnic problems of juvenile delinquency (and other atrocities), backed by Wertham's campaign, for he offered the easiest solution of all psychologists to the problem - abolish comic books and you thereby ultimately abolish crime.

The United States Senate Committee Investigating Juvenile Delinquency (and other atrocities) concluded, after an exhaustive study of the situation, that (1) Comic books were not a cause of crime, (2) the majority of comic readers were the same sort of reader who was least likely to stomach crime and horror comics (and other atrocities) and (3) only a person already headed toward juvenile delinquency would be affected adversely by comic books. Comic books were exonerated of most of Wertham's arguments by the above conclusions (~~Mkq~~ Wertham's claim that comic books had no literary merit is open to debate, of course).

As the saying goes, "The proof is in the pudding," for though the puritanistic Comics Code has successful seperated young, impressionable readers from all contact whatsoever with the harsh, sorrid, undermining worlds of crime, werewolves, and other atrocities, the crime rate has risen tremendously- and the public is now looking for another scapegoat. Though America was proven wrong in its condemnation of comic books, and though America faltered amazingly in looking for its solution to the problem of juvenile delinquency, comic fandom can take heart in the democratic, American Way. At long last, the country has found the true cause of the problem of teenage delinquency (and other atrocities), namely, television, horror films, and 'other atrocities"

Mike Vosburg's fabulous MASQUERADER #6 is now available from the SFCA for 75¢ (mailed flat). Below is a partial ist of the features in this photo-offset issue:

A HISTORY OF ACE publications: an interesting account of the company that published Capt. Courageous, Unknown Soldier, and so many others; written by Raymond Miller and illoed by Grass Green.

THE COWL RETURNS ..in an action-packed strip written by Mike Vosburg and illustrated by Ronn Foss.

THE RAVEN, AUSTRALIA'S FIGHTING HERO...written by Glen Johnson and illustrated by Alan Weiss.

E.C., THE NEW TREND... written by Ed Lahmann with reproduction of EC art.

JOE KUBERT, KING OF ILLUSTRATORS...written by Scott Russell and illustrated by Mike Vosburg.

The above, alone is worth more than the price of the issue, but there are many more features; by such people as Len Wein, Dick West, L.L. Simpson, and Dick Memorich.

No serious fan should miss this truly superb effort by Mike Vosburg and his contributors. Send 75¢ (no stamps) for each copy you want to: THE SFCA, 9875 SW 212 St., Miami, 57, Fla.

THEY WROTE ABOUT THE COMICS: Daniel C. Knowlton
Reviewed by Paul Gambaccini

Telepathy is my forte. To demonstrate my tremendous ability, I'll read your mind at this moment! Right now, you're wondering (that is, if you're not thinking about what an idiot I am, in which case you're excused) "Who the heck is Daniel C. Knowlton?" And, I'm afraid this article won't help much in answering! All I know about him is that (1) He's a man. (2) He's teaching (or at least was recently) at New York University. (3) He wrote the article on comics for COLLIER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA and it is for this that this review is concerned with Mr. Knolton. I havn't seen any issues of COLLIER'S MAGAZINE on the stands for years now (and neither has anybody else!), and, to be frank, I don't know if the encyclopedia suffered a similar fate. But, this is all irrelevant! Down to the article dealing with comic strips, books, and codes in late 1950's edition of COLLIER's ENCYCLOPEDIA!

The article dealt with personal opinions and the history of comic strips more than with facts about comics. Included were reproductions of several famed comic strips--noticeably lacking were illustrations of popular comic books! The ten "Most Popular" old strips were listed. In order, they were.

(1) Joe Palooka, created and drawn by Ham Fisher until his violent death in 1955. It took Joe many years to get his girl friend permanently at his side, and serveral comic books! (appearences in Sullivan's BIG SHOT with Skyman and Face also appearing in the book at the time, his own JOE PALOOKA book for Harvey (which lasted until 1961), and probably others), but he finally did.

(2) Blondie, Chic Young's perennial favorite.

(3) Li'l Abner, on which Frank Frazetta was recently wasted.

(4) Little Orphan Annie ("The Girl with the Glassy Stare").

(5) Terry and the Pirates-then by Caniff, followed by Wunder, now by Evans, a former ECer.

(6) Dick Tracy, secretly Batman (ever notice those jaws and chins?)

(7) Moon Mullins, created by the late Ferd Johnson.

(8) Gasoline Alley, which just keeps rolling along.

(9) Bringing Up Father (which I can't stand, if that has any significance).

(10) The Gumps, which to my knowledge has disappeared completely, except for some of MAD's parodies on defunct fancies. This family even appeared in a comic of its own, plugged in a full page ads in DC comics of the 40's. (If any fans still read this strip in their newspapers, please notify yours truly. The last I saw of them was a few years back.)

This has been mainly a regurgitation of facts so far, and that's all you're gonna get! (What do you expect from an encyclopedia--a sense of wonder?)

Strips were divided into 10 groups by the Child Study Association of America. Briefly, these were;

(1) Adventure (Jungle Jim, etc.)

(2) Fantasbic adventure (Superman, Flash Gordon, Batman)

(3) War (many examples)

(4) Crime (Dick Tracy, etc.)
(5) Real (Fronteirs of Science and so forth)
(6) Jungle (Tarzan and...hmmm...Jungle Jim again?)
(7(Animal (8) Humor (9) Love (10) Classics.

These divisons hold for books and strips equally asm well.

But, Martin Sheridan, in his bcok COMICS AND THEIR CREATORS, discussed in the article, lists 6 divisions. He calls them;

(1) Marriage strips (Gumps, Blondie, etc.)
(2) Adventure strips (Dick Tracy; Superman and his cronies would not fit into this category according to Sheridan)
(3) Fantastic (Supe, Flash Gordon, and so forth)
(4) Girl strips (ahem, I'd better rephrase that) such as Tillie the Toiler. Latterday strips would include Penny and other teen-age features.
(5) Panels (Ripley's Believe it or not, etc.)
(6) Potpourri, in which Sheridan makes up for a lousy system by dumping everything he hasn't accounted for into one category! Popeye, Pete the Tramp, Disney efforts, etc. would lump together in this division.

Sheridan's book was published in 2 1942. It included biogs of over 200 strips and artists, with reproductions of most of them. The book, subtitled "True Stories of American Cartoonists," was evidently quite popular. REG'LAR FELLERS HEROIC COMICS ran a contest, giving 25 copies away to the best 25 letters telling the editors what the readers' favorite comic was. Each copy was autographed by Sheridan.

A rundown of comic strip history was also included in the article. The capper was a list of the ten supposedly "Most Popular Comics During the 1940's." In order, they were: WALT DISNEY's COMICS AND STORIES, BATMAN, CAPTAIN AMERICA, TRUE COMICS(featuring lousy art and lousy "true" stories), ACE COMICS (strip reprints--Phantom, Prince Valiant, Timm Tyler, etc.), CALLING ALL GIRLS, KING COMICS, CRACKAJACK, MILITARY(Blackhawk), and WORLD'S FAIR.

This list is rather hard to believe! CAPTAIN MARVEL, which at one time was published bi-weekly and had a circulation of over 2,000,000, does not rate top ten mention, nor does SUPERMAN, which was over a million, ACTION (once heralded as America's top-selling comic during the '40's before CM came along), ora ALL STAR. Included, instead, were TRUE COMICS, a lousy, oversized bi-monthly with 'true' stories concerning money-making subjects(that is, subjects that would make money for the editors) --crime, baseball, and law enforcement!--WORLD'S FAIR COMICS, a two-shot(!) with one shot in the '40's, and other big, but relatively insignifiwant items.

Unlike most fandom articles and reviews, the encyclopedia article did not even have one joke! And it just cut the reader off in thin air, like this

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THE EDITOR SPEAKS:

With our first issue of the GOLDEN AGE, we learned one thing--photo-stencil is not a particularly good process for reproducing photographs (as you can plainly see). Incidently, if you hold this page back from you-2 or 3 feet-the picture will become a little clearer.

However, aside from this one thing, I am pretty proud of this first issue. I have always wanted to publish a straight article fanzine of high quality, and many people have been unable to understand why the RB*CC cannot be both an article and ad zine. So, with the GOLDEN AGE I feel I am fulfilling my own ambition and at the same time "showing' the above mentioned fans why what they want is not possible (they say one picture is worth a thousand words). THE GOLDEN AGE will definitely not have a set publishing schedule--because I have no way of knowing howz long the gathering of material will take. Also, my time available for working on the GA is very limited. We hope to have the 2nd issue out sometime in July, however, that is not a definite date, so do not order #2 until it is officially advertised.

In all issues of THE GOLDEN AGE, we will present only the finest material that is made available to us--this is and will be one of our main objectives.

Contributions are now being accepted for future issues. No written pieces under three pages in length can be considered for publication in the GA. Art contributions should be submitted in black ink on regular sized white paper, using a 3/4 inch margin on all four sides.

Your comments on THE GOLDEN AGE are most assuredly welcome.

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ARE YOU A READER OF THE RB*CC, THE FANZINE AND MARKETPLACE FOR ALL OF COMICDOM? It's also the most widely read and circulated zine in fandom. For a sample copy, send 50¢ to THE SFCA.

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